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THE

WORKING OF THE UNITED STATES' SANITARY COMMISSION

WITH REGARD TO

ARMIES IN THE FIELD.

BY

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LECTURE.

Friday, February 10th, 1865.

Lieut.-Col. ST. LEGER ALCOCK, Vice-President, in the Chair.

THE WORKING OF THE UNITED STATES' SANITARY COMMISSION WITH REGARD TO ARMIES IN THE FIELD.

By E. C. Fisher, Esq., United States' Sanitary Commission (English Branch).

The Sanitary Commission of the United States may be said to have inaugurated a new era in the history of war. It has linked the volunteer philanthrophy of the people to the unavoidable exclusiveness and stringent discipline of the army, and proved to the world at large that even women and children may largely add to the effectiveness of the soldier, thereby increasing the probabilities of victory. This self-organized association,—the offspring of the women of America, tutored by ministers of the Gospel and philanthropists, directed and supported by private enterprise and skill alone,—has unceasingly supplemented the medical service of the American army during nearly four years, compelling one of the principal surgeons to declare "We could not do without the Sanitary Commission." Such is the language of the Medical Inspector of the army of the Potomac, and I fear to commit no exaggeration in asserting, aside even from such high official authority,—that whatever success may have attended the Federal arms during this long and fearful struggle is due in large measure to the untiring exertions, sound judgment and liberality of this volunteer commission.

But while claiming credit for what has been effected by this almoner of the American people, I must admit that the idea of a sanitary commission was borrowed from a land which we speak of in the

United States as the "Old Country." It was England's experience in the Crimea and Hindostan which led us at the very commencement of the war to organise operations which you only began under the teachings of pressing necessity. Your troubles and misfortunes were a lesson to us from which it would have been strange had we not profited; and we therefore essayed at the very outset to *prevent* those evils from which you had suffered, and which were more likely to damage an army composed of volunteers than one of highly-disciplined regulars. Nor is it for this alone that we have to thank Englishmen. The practical teachings and saintly devotion of Florence Nightingale, the statesmanly skill and broad humanitarian counsels of the great and good Sidney Herbert were known and appreciated throughout the United States, and the people of America, addressed themselves to the work before them with all the benefit of your experience, taking up your work, as it were, where you had laid it down. We have "bettered the instruction." We have sought out channels of benevolence unthought of by you, perhaps because not formerly regarded as opportune or practicable. We return you your ten talents with other ten, in the name of one common humanity and race, believing that should England again have the misfortune to engage in war, the experience of your brethren in America will benefit your soldiers, and as largely increase the effectiveness of your army as it has done that of our own.

In view of the present relations of the United States' Sanitary Commission with the Government, it is hard to believe that the Commission had any difficulty in entering on existence. But it had to fight long and hard for that recognition without which existence was not possible. Governments are the same everywhere. Exclusiveness and jealousy of outside interference—call it by suggestion or by what name we will—are universally necessary to them. It was so most emphatically with the American Government when President Lincoln entered on office; yet I fear not to assert that no country at any period was more in need of such an organization as this Commission, than the United States was at the commencement of the rebellion There was no money in the Federal treasury, the national credit had become frightfully depreciated, the banking corporations declined at first to advance any loans, the Northern arsenals were emptied of their arms, which had been carried into the Southern States during President Buchanan's administration, the ships of the navy were scattered over the world on foreign stations or locked up in Southern ports, the whole North, in fine, was on an absolute peace establishment, and precisely in the position to require any help which could be offered. The Government was not alive to the magnitude of the crisis. Somebody said and many repeated, "it will all be over in ninety days." The President and his subordinates were new to official responsibility; what we possessed of regular troops were scattered amongst the Indian tribes on the frontier of civilisation, all the way from Oregon to Texas; the Army Medical Bureau was organized for a force of some 15,000 men; medicines, hospital furniture and necessaries were not in existence beyond the condition, as regards quantity, of

"samples," and yet notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, men in office checked unofficial suggestion as interfering and unnecessary. The President called upon the country for 75,000 volunteers. Farm labourers, clerks in counting-houses, artisans, men of all classes in civil life responded with alacrity to the appeal, volunteering in fact to relinquish the comforts of home and civilisation, for the hardships of campaigning in the deadly malarious regions of the South. They thought they had but to fight: they knew little or nothing of the havoc which disease makes in armies, and the Government, by force of circumstances, could not ward off disease from their ranks.

There is a maxim in political economy, "demand creates supply," which is equally applicable to military affairs. Necessity brought forth the sanitary commission, a bashful infant at first, destined ere long to grow into its present manly proportions, although its parents little thought at its nativity what a giant it would become. The women were the first to understand the gravity of affairs, and, if we may judge by their actions, it is safe to assert that they at least did not believe the war would be over in ninety days. They met in each others houses in the great centres of population, and of their own volition and inspiration organized themselves into Soldiers' Aid Societies, working the whole day through for the comfort and relief of the troops. Their labours were simple at first, but the basements of churches and many public buildings in the large cities of the North soon became filled to overflowing with the two articles of lint and bandages. But these women were not long in understanding that vastly more would be required for the army than merely these articles. What that more could be they could not tell, because the answer to the question fell within the province of man's experience alone. One of the first, if not the very first of the Soldiers' Aid Societies established, namely, the "Women's Central Association of New York," received the following sound advice from a clergyman of that city. "You want enquiry from the only correct sources. You must find out first what the Government *will* do and *can* do, and then helping it by working *with it*, and doing what it cannot. You must have advice derived from the Government." Meanwhile, the medical profession of New York had commenced moving in behalf of the army. Having the same object in view as the women, it was quickly decided to send a deputation to the authorities at Washington: three organisations were therein represented, that of the women above mentioned, the "Advising Committee of the Boards of Physicians and Surgeons of the Hospitals of New York," and the "New York Medical Association for furnishing Hospital Supplies in aid of the Army." The deputation consisted of four members, the clergyman, Dr. Bellows, now President of the Commission, who had given such sound advice to the Women's Association, and three of the most eminent of New York physicians. On the 18th of May, 1861, they presented a memorial to the Secretary of War praying for the appointment of a sanitary commission. The memorial in question concluded as follows:—

"It must be well-known to the Department of War that several

such commissions followed the Crimean and Indian wars. The civilisation and humanity of the age, and of the American people demand that such a commission should precede our second war of independence more sacred than the first. We wish to prevent the evils that England and France could only investigate and deplore. The war ought to be waged in a spirit of the highest intelligence, humanity, and tenderness for the health, comfort, and safety of our brave troops, and every measure of the Government that shows its sense of this will be eminently popular, strengthen its hands, and redound to its glory at home and abroad.

"The undersigned are charged with several distinct petitions, additional to that of asking for a commission for the purposes above described, although they would all fall under the duties of that commission.

"They ask that the Secretary of War will order some new rigour in the inspection of volunteer troops, as they are persuaded that, under the present state regulations throughout the country, a great number of under-aged and unsuitable persons are mustered, who are likely to swell the bills of mortality in the army to a fearful percentage, to encumber the hospitals and embarrass the columns.

"The Committee represent that the Women's Central Association of Relief have selected, and are selecting, out of several hundred candidates, one hundred women, suited in all respects to become nurses in the general hospitals of the army. These women, the distinguished physicians and surgeons of the various hospitals in New York have undertaken to educate and drill in a most thorough and laborious manner; and the Committee ask that the War Department consent to receive, on wages, these nurses, in such numbers as the exigencies of the campaign may require. It is not proposed that the nurses should advance to the seat of war until directly called for by the Medical Bureau here, nor that the Government should be at any expense until they are actually in service.

"It is believed that a commission would bring these and other matters of great interest and importance to the health of the troops into the shape of easy and practical adoption. But if no commission is appointed the Committee pray that the Secretary will order the several suggestions made to be carried into immediate effect, if consistent with the laws of the department, or possible without the action of Congress.

"Feeling themselves directly to represent large and important constituencies, and, indirectly, a wide-spread and commanding public sentiment, the Committee would most respectfully urge the immediate attention of the Secretary to the objects of their prayer.

"Very respectfully,

"Henry W. Bellows, D.D.
"W. H. Van Buren, M.D.
"Elisha Harris, M.D.
"J. Harsen, M.D."

The proposal was not favourably received by the authorities

although the then Acting Surgeon-General of the Army, Dr. Wood, endorsed the prayer of the memorialists in the following terms:—

"The Medical Bureau would, in my judgment, derive important and useful aid from the counsels and well-directed efforts of an intelligent and scientific commission, to be styled 'A Commission of Inquiry and advice in respect of the Sanitary interests of the United States' Forces,' and acting in co-operation with the bureau, in elaborating and applying such facts as might be elicited from the experience and more extended observation of those connected with armies, with reference to the diet and hygiene of troops, and the organisation of military hospitals."

Endorsement from such high authority nerved the deputation to press its demands, and a second memorial was forwarded to the Government defining the powers required for the proposed commission and the objects it would endeavour to accomplish. These powers and objects were thus stated:—

"The Commission being organized for the purposes only of inquiry and advice, asks for no legal powers, but only the official recognition and moral countenance of the Government, which will be secured by its public appointment. It asks for a recommendatory order, addressed in its favour to all the officers of the Government, to further its inquiries; for permission to correspond and confer, on a confidential footing, with the Medical Bureau and the War Department, proffering such suggestions and counsels as its investigation and studies may from time to time prompt and enable it to offer.

"The Commission seeks no pecuniary remuneration from the Government. Its motives being humane and patriotic, its labours will be its own reward. The assignment to them of a room in one of the public buildings, with stationery and other necessary conveniences, would meet their expectations in this direction.

"The Commission asks leave to sit through the war, either in Washington or when and where it may find it most convenient and useful; but it will disband should experience render its operations embarrassing to the Government, or less necessary and useful than it is now supposed they will prove.

"The general object of the Commission is, through suggestions reported from time to time to the Medical Bureau and the War Department, to bring to bear upon the health, comfort, and *morale* of our troops the fullest and ripest teachings of sanitary science in its application to military life, whether deduced from theory or practical observation, from general hygienic principles, or from the experience of the Crimean, the East Indian, and the Italian wars. Its objects are purely advisory.

"The specific points to which its attention would be directed may here be partly indicated, but in some part may depend upon the course of events, and the results of its own observations and promptings when fairly at work. If it knew precisely what the results of its own inquiries would be, it would state them at once, without asking for that authority and those governmental facilities essential to a successful investigation of the subject. As the Government may select its

own commissioners—the persons named in the recommendation of the Medical Bureau being wholly undesirous, however willing, to serve, if other persons more deserving of the confidence of the Government and of the public can be nominated—it is hoped that the character of the commission will be the best warrant the government can have, that the inquiries of the Commission, both as to their nature and the manner of conducting them, will be pursued with discretion and a carerul eye to avoiding impertinent and offensive interference with the legal authority and official rights of any of the bureaus with which it may be brought in contact.

"The Commission proposes a practical inquiry into the material of the volunteer force, with reference to the laws and usages of the several states in the matter of inspection, with the hope of assimilating their regulations with those of the army proper, alike in the appointment of medical and other officers, and in the rigorous application of just rules and principles to recruiting and inspection laws. This inquiry would exhaust every topic pertaining to the original material of the army, considered as a subject of sanitary and medical care.

"The Commission would inquire with scientific thoroughness into the subject of diet, cooking, cooks, clothing, tents, camping grounds, transports, transitory depots with their exposures, camp police, with reference to settling the question how far the regulations of the army proper are or can be practically carried out among the volunteer regiments, and what changes or modifications are desirable from their peculiar character and circumstances? Everything appertaining to outfit, cleanliness, precautions against damp, cold, heat, malaria, infection; crude, unvaried, or ill-cooked food, and an irregular or careless regimental commissariat, would fall under this head.

"The Commission would inquire into the organization of military hospitals, general and regimental; the precise regulations and routine through which the services of the patriotic women of the country may be made available as nurses; the nature and sufficiency of hospital supplies; the method of obtaining and regulating all other extra and unbought supplies contributing to the comfort of the sick; the question of ambulances and field service, and of extra medical aid; and whatever else relates to the care, relief, or cure of the sick and wounded—their investigations being guided by the highest and latest medical and military experience, and carefully adapted to the nature and wants of our immediate army, and its peculiar origin and circumstances."

Careful as were the delegates in guarding against any possible interference with the Medical Bureaus and other departments of the army, and notwithstanding they declared in advance, that all the operations of the proposed Commission would be carried on from first to last at its own proper expense, the Government hesitated. The opinions then entertained at Washington, that inconvenience in some unforeseen manner might arise from such an organization, produced an unfavourable impression in administrative circles; whilst President Lincoln characterised the projected commission, in the worst joke he ever made, as nothing more nor less than a fifth wheel to a coach. But the pressure from outside, in other words, from the whole body of

the people, was too strong to be resisted. The inconvenience of the situation was too grave, the Medical Bureau too small and inexperienced to grapple with the threatened crisis, and the War Department finally consented to the authorization of the body—an authorization limited to these two duties, inquiry into the sanitary condition of the troops, and advice to the medical and kindred bureaus of the army upon the amelioration or cure of abuses. When this authorization of the Secretary of War was submitted to the President for his approval, Mr. Lincoln endorsed it with the very suggestive proviso—"The Commission will exist until the Secretary of War shall otherwise direct, unless sooner dissolved by its own action."

Having thus acquired the right to exist, to inquire and advise—temporarily though it were and on sufferance—it might be supposed that the commission had surmounted the ordeal of birth, and could now address itself to the duties devolving upon it. But a newly appointed Surgeon-General viewed the organisation with distrust. He declared his intention "to have nothing to do with it; that if it went into operation the responsibility must not rest upon him; and that it was a perilous conception to allow any such outside body to come into being." The officer in question was past the prime of life; his experience had not educated him to grapple with the colossal and unheard-of difficulties now threatening the army; he introduced no reforms into the bureau, and steadily maintained time-honoured abuses—abuses comparatively innocuous in an army of 15,000 men which occasionally saw bush-fighting on the frontier, but certain to be magnified a hundred-fold in the struggle on which the country was entering. It was manifestly necessary to reform the medical department of the army from the Surgeon-General to the youngest officer in the service, and the Sanitary Commission addressed itself to the task. The country soon understood and appreciated the organisation and purpose of the commission, so rapidly indeed, that within a few months of its existence the Commission had come to mean the whole medical profession of the North outside the army, and the entire body of the people who wished well to the soldiers, and desired to increase their comfort and efficiency. The Commission could therefore act with something akin to national authority, and it determined as one of its first duties to reform the medical department of the army, so as to render it competent to deal with the new phase in the army's requirements. Under its auspices a bill was drawn up in the executive committee of the Commission, introduced into Congress, carried by large majorities through both houses of the National Legislature, and finally endorsed by the President himself. A main feature of the new law was the appointment of six Inspectors-General; but the principal reform there inaugurated was one which many in Europe will perhaps regard as radical, if not revolutionary, namely, the substitution of capability for the time-honoured rule of seniority. It is no part of my duty to defend this reform. I am well aware that such an improvement, if improvement it be, may open the door to official favouritism, and, on the other hand, lead to injustice towards old and competent officers; but I may be permitted to assert that the reform in question has worked well in the United

States. Under the new Medical Act, a simple assistant-surgeon leaped over the heads of many seniors—a rise in grade from first lieutenant to Brigadier-General, relinquishing the control of a single hospital for the supervision of the medical necessities of half a million men. The Sanitary Commission which had inaugurated the new condition of affairs in the Medical Bureau suggested the nomination of this officer to the President, and was the cause of his confirmation by the senate, and the judgment of the Commission in the selection of Dr. William A. Hammond has been endorsed by the whole country, and commended by many of the leading medical organs of Great Britain and the continent of Europe. Perhaps the best indorsement of the soundness of the reform initiated by the Sanitary Commission, so far as the United States are concerned, lies in the fact of capability having since been substituted for seniority in the army itself. The change worked so beneficially in the medical department that the rule was subsequently applied elsewhere, Congress empowering the President to give command in the military departments to any officer he should select, without regard to seniority.

The official warrant for the organization of the Sanitary Commission was issued on the 9th of June, 1861, three weeks after the presentation of their first memorial to the Secretary of War by the New York delegates. The members of the Commission then appointed by the government, nearly all of whom are still engaged in the duty, forthwith commenced a preliminary tour of inspection over an area as large as half the continent of Europe. Naturally enough, the inspection was not provocative of satisfaction. Scores of thousands of men newly drawn from civil life were huddled together in camp or barracks in defiance of all known sanitary requirements; the vast majority of their officers knew as little of drill and discipline as the men themselves; the surgeons found themselves in presence of new forms of disease, without experience to guide or remedies obtainable. From the banks of the Potomac, the swamps of the South, the prairie lands of the West, came the same refrain to the head-quarters of the Commission—"The first sanitary requirement of all is stern, unrelenting military discipline." And the Commission forthwith memorialized the Government in the following emphatic language:—

"The sanitary commission, in their endeavours to promote temperance, cleanliness and comfort among the troops, have become convinced that the first sanitary law in camp and among soldiers is *military* discipline, and that unless this is vigorously asserted and enforced it is useless to attempt and impossible to effect by any secondary means the great end they propose, which is the health and happiness of the army. Looking only to the health and comfort of the troops, it is our profound conviction that any special relaxation of military discipline in favour of volunteer troops, based either upon their supposed unwillingness or inability to endure it, or upon the alleged expectation of the public, is a fallacious policy, and fraught with peril to the lives of the men and the success of the national cause; and that, speaking in the name of the families and the communities from which the volunteers come, and in the name of humanity and religion, we implore that the

most thorough system of military discipline be carried out with the officers and men of the volunteer force, as the first and essential condition of their health, comfort, and morality."

Frequently during the war has the Sanitary Commission given similar advice to the Government on subjects which might seem to be entirely foreign to its organization; but it must not be forgotten that the association, while using the plea of humanity with the people, was compelled to adopt the tone of increased soldierly efficiency with the military authorities as the reason for its own existence. It has learnt, in fine, to yoke humanity with war; and, by depriving the latter of many of its accustomed horrors, has increased the efficiency of the army, and thereby strengthened the hands of the Government.

The first and principal duty of the Commission—sanitary inspection—was commenced, as already seen, immediately upon the authorization of the body by the Government. At the outbreak of the war, that is to say, during the summer of 1861, the Northern armies were in serious danger from epidemic disease. Modern sanitary science was hardly recognized in the regulations of the Medical Bureau, and its officers could not be expected to go beyond the strict line of official duty when that duty was more than quadrupled. The first business of the Commission, therefore, was to awaken general attention to the sanitary interests of the army, and to suggest improvements in the condition of camps, quarters, hospitals, and the men themselves. It sent out medical inspectors forthwith to warn inexperienced officers of the peril to which filth, bad ventilation, and bad food exposed their commands. It brought to bear upon the Government the influence of the medical profession throughout the country, effected the extension and invigoration of the Medical Bureau, and secured the express recognition of the *prevention* of disease, no less than its *cure*, as among the functions of the medical staff. The United States' Government now employs its own sanitary inspectors, and performs a certain portion of the preventive work effected by the Commission alone during the first year of its existence. But the Commission still keeps up an inspectorial *corps* auxiliary to that of the Government, for the latter is numerically unequal to its work, and there are special causes besides, which frequently interfere with its full efficiency.

Each inspector of the Commission, on visiting a camp or post, puts himself in the first place in communication with the military authorities, and asks their co-operation. This being secured, he proceeds to investigate the condition of the men in every particular that bears on their liability to disease, and the sufficiency of the remedial agencies within their reach. He inquires into the quality of their water supply, food, cooking, and clothing; the ventilation and cleanliness of their camp or quarters; the position of their latrines; the provision for the removal and destruction of refuse or offal; the equipment of their field or post hospital; their ambulance service; the competency of their medical officers; the salubrity or otherwise of their camp-site or post; the sufficiency of their bedding and blankets; the character of the diseases that have prevailed among them, and the precautions thereby indicated.

On these points he advises the medical and military authorities as a sanitary expert. His inspection, generally, discloses something that can be done to promote the health of the command. He finds, for instance, that tendencies to malarious disease exist, calling for quinine as a prophylactic; or scorbutic taints, requiring supplies of fresh vegetables; or deficiency of stimulants, bedding, articles of hospital diet, or disinfecting materials. If the want, whatever it is, can be promptly supplied through the regular official channels, he sees that it is done; but if it cannot, or if, as frequently is the case, something is required which Government does not undertake to supply, he calls upon the Relief Department of the Commission, which supplies it according to its ability. If the officer who should obtain it, be inexperienced in requisitions and supply-tables, the inspector is able to assist him. If the defect arise from corruption or incapacity, he reports the fact. It sometimes happens that the health of a camp is endangered by want, not of supplies, but of some work for which authority cannot at once be obtained. In such case, money is appropriated by the Standing Committee, or, in case of emergency, by the Associate Secretary, on the inspector's report. The Commission has done much work of this class. It has improved the ventilation of hospitals (Dr. Reid, formerly in charge of the ventilation at the Houses of Parliament, was at the head of this branch of the Commission's work at the period of his decease, two years ago), it has sunk wells to improve the water-supply of camps, built temporary hospitals and quarters to replace unwholesome and dangerous buildings, furnished and fitted up hospital transports, and converted ordinary railway carriages into railway ambulances, with cooking apparatus and store-rooms, and litters hung on springs, in which thousands of men, with fractured limbs, have travelled hundreds of miles without avoidable suffering or injury.

The results of every inspection are noted on blanks provided for the purpose, and are severally reported. Each report covers about two hundred distinct points affecting the sanitary condition and wants of the force inspected. More than 2,000 of these reports have been accumulated. These are digested and tabulated as received, by a competent actuary; and it is believed that the body of military and medical statistics thus collected, is among the largest and most valuable in existence. Surely such a work cannot fail to furnish conclusions of the utmost importance to sanitary science.

The Commission employs other agencies for the prevention of disease. It has furnished material for the vaccination of thousands of men at a time, now happily past, when the Medical Bureau was unable to supply the tenth part of what was needed, and only issued what it had, after a fortnight's delay. It has thus stayed the ravages of small-pox in regiments crowded on board transports, after that disease had actually begun to spread amongst the men. During the first year of the war, all classes of "eruptive disease" in one of our most important military departments, were consigned indiscriminately to a single hospital, from which men were "discharged cured" of mumps or measles, and rejoined their regiments to sicken and die of the small-pox contracted in this "hospital," so called, and to infect and kill their

comrades. It was through the persevering remonstrance and protest of the Commission that this abuse was at last corrected.

The Commission has also circulated throughout the army, and especially among the medical staff, many hundred thousand of its medical documents. This series now numbers eighteen publications, each devoted to some special point of prevention or cure. Some of them are addressed to the individual soldier, but the great majority are for the use of the medical staff, and relate to the prevention or treatment of the diseases to which camps are specially exposed, and to sundry operations of military surgery with which it cannot be expected that surgeons recently appointed from civil life should be generally familiar. These monographs have been prepared specially, at the request of the Commission, by some of the most eminent physicians and surgeons in the country. The list comprises the following treatises :—

An Introductory Paper on the employment of Anæsthetics in military surgery.
Report on Military Hygiene and Therapeutics.
Directions to Army Surgeons on Fields of Battle.
Rules for preserving the Health of the Soldier.
Report on the use of Quinine as a Prophylactic.
Vaccination in Armies.
Report on Amputations.
Report on Amputations through the Foot, and at the Ankle Joint.
Venereal Diseases, with special reference to practice in the Army and Navy.
Reports on—
Pneumonia.
Continued Fevers.
Excision of Joints for Traumatic cause.
Dysentery.
Scurvy.
Nature and treatment of Fractures in military surgery.
Nature and treatment of Miasmatic Fever.
Nature and Treatment of Yellow Fever.
Hemorrhage from wounds.
Control and prevention of Infectious Diseases in camps, transports, and hospitals.

It is proper to mention here that the Medical Bureau of the army has liberally supplied the surgeons with a well assorted library of medical works; but these monographs of the Commission are considered indispensable to the staff, and are sought for with avidity by the surgeons. I have the honour to request your acceptance, Mr. President, of a few copies of a work containing those monographs, edited in its present form by Dr. Hammond, the late surgeon-general, under the auspices of the Commission. Many surgeons of her Majesty's army and navy have expressed to me their unqualified approval of these essays, and I have, therefore, some justification for believing that the work will not prove unacceptable or useless. There are two

other classes of publications edited and distributed, in most instances gratis, by the Commission; one intended for the troops themselves, and calculated to amuse and instruct at the same time, the other for the benefit of the people at large, reporting at short periodical intervals the labours, wants, and condition of the people's almoner—the Commission. Millions, literally, of these documents have been issued broadcast during the war. As agent of the Commission in England, I have had the pleasure to circulate myself upwards of 10,000 copies in this country, for the Association I represent has understood from the outset that its labours are not confined to America alone, but are designed to benefit humanity and relieve suffering everywhere.

The Commission institutes special inspections also, from time to time, outside of its general inspection system. It employs medical agents to look into the condition of such camps or hospitals as seem to require special attention, and to ascertain and report the wants of the different armies during or immediately after a trying campaign. It has lately made a thorough inspection of all military hospitals throughout our vast extent of territory, employing for this purpose medical practitioners of the highest professional standing. Their recommendations of improvement in our hospital system, and its administration, have been submitted to the proper authorities, and in nearly every instance promptly acted upon.

From the nature of the case, it is impossible to estimate with accuracy how many men have been saved from disease or death by these labours of the Commission, nor to calculate how much efficiency has been economized to the service by this one branch of prevention, for, though the results of the treatment of disease can be more or less accurately recorded, the result of preventive measures cannot be stated with any kind of certainty. The only attainable data are the percentage of disease among men to whom such preventive measures have been applied, and among those to whom they have not. Though inferences from comparison of the two are not absolutely to be relied on, a comparison of the mortality rates of the American army with those of others may perhaps throw some light on the subject.

While the French army in 1528 was preparing to besiege the forts protecting Baiæ, it was almost totally destroyed by malarious disease. Of 28,000 men, only 4,000 remained alive, and they were helpless. The region around Baiæ is certainly not worse than some of the malarious districts of the United States, as, for instance, the swamps of the Tennessee, Mississippi, and Chickahominy, the Everglades of Florida and the sea islands of South Carolina, yet, nevertheless, native born Americans and foreigners from every country in Europe live in those districts with comparative freedom from disease. The explanation lies in the fact that sanitary science is at present studied and understood the medical practitioner aiming at prevention rather than cure.

The average annual loss of the whole British army during the Peninsular War was 165 men out of every thousand; but of these 165, 11[illegible] died by disease or from accident. From 1803 to 1812 the annual average death-rate of the British army "abroad" was 80 per thousand 71 by disease, and only 9 from wounds received in action. In th

Burmese War the loss was 35 per thousand from wounds, whilst from sickness it rose to the terrible figure of 450 per thousand.

In July, August, and September, 1854, the British army lost at the rate of 293 men out of 1,000 per annum. 96 per cent. of this loss was from disease. During the next three months, October, November, and December, 1854, the loss was at the annual rate of 511 out of every thousand, seven-eighths of which were from disease. In January, 1855, it was at the rate of 1,174 per thousand per annum, 97 per cent. of the whole loss being due to disease alone. Who can describe the horrors of Varna? Dr. Aitkin says: "My estimates lead to the conclusion that the amount of sickness at Varna was greater than that of the French army in Spain, and nearly as great as the army of Portugal while engaged in active campaigns, and this, too, though not a soldier in Lord Raglan's army had fired a shot. From October, 1854, to April, 1855, six months, the army of 23,775 men lost 9,248 by sickness, and only 608 by wounds. In the last six months of the Crimean campaign, including the final assaults which carried Sebastopol, the French had 21,957 men wounded, and 101,128 cases of sickness.

Up to May 18th, 1862, that is to say, during a period of about twelve months of actual campaigning, the United States' armies lost at the rate of 53 men per thousand per annum, and only 44 per cent. of that loss was by disease and accident. The report of the Secretary of War in 1864 states the number of patients in the general hospitals up to June 30, 1863, as 9·1 per cent., and in field hospitals 4·4 per cent. of the whole national force, numbering upwards of half a million men. Of this aggregate of 13·5 per cent., 11 per cent. were due to sickness, and 2·5 to wounds and other casualties.

Such a gratifying result can only be explained by the marked attention paid to sanitary requirements, and the stringent but beneficent discipline which has enforced the teachings of science, for it must be borne in mind that the armies of the United States were peculiarly liable to the ravages of disease, in a far higher ratio assuredly than the armies of European nations. The American people, prior to this war, were remarkably non-military. Out-of-door pursuits were little in vogue, as with Englishmen; the vast majority of the officers were as ignorant of their duties as the privates themselves; the Southern States, so far as regarded military areas and strategic points, were as unhealthy, to say the least, as any portions of the European continent, whilst sanitary science, as applicable to armies, had to be taught from its very rudiments. What has been accomplished is due, in a great measure, to the Sanitary Commission—*directly*, by its own recommendations to the officers and men themselves; *indirectly*, by the influence it has brought to bear upon the Government in making *prevention* a part of medical duty as well as *cure*.

I have thus far sketched the operations of the Commission in the first part of its labours—namely, inquiry as to the health, comfort and efficiency of the troops, and advice in reference to their improvement. These two questions may be considered to form the whole duty of such bodies, but the Sanitary Commission of the United States has gone far beyond mere inquiry and advice. Its chapter of "Relief" is one of

the brightest in its history. The honour of the initiation of this department is due to the women; and the movement on their part was general and almost simultaneous throughout the North at the very commencement of the war. But this important branch of the Commission's labours only reached its present development after much experience and reflection. Until it was known what the troops might want, and the Government could not immediately supply, many things would be overlooked which now seem to be absolutely necessary. What appeared to be immediately required was offered without delay, the first record of direct relief being the tender to the Government of 100 trained female nurses. The advisers of the women, however, became satisfied from their visit to Washington that enormous and frequent calls for help would be made upon the benevolent; and the Commission anticipated the threatening crisis by appeals to the citizens at large, and especially to the great moneyed corporations, such as insurance and banking companies. The appeal was not made in vain. Contributions flowed in from all quarters, and the first necessities of the troops were attended to without delay, but not in a degree equal to the increasing demand for help. The most pressing want of the Commission was *system.* Examples of the system requisite, were nowhere forthcoming, for the work was new, and the system could only be taught by hard experience. Independent agencies of relief existed throughout the various Northern States, organised expressly to aid the volunteers from particular localities. This system, if system it may be called, was simply a perpetuation of the principle for which the rebellious States were contending, but against which the North protested. I shall avoid political questions as thoroughly as possible in my remarks, but am compelled to refer to them in this one instance in order to show what the Sanitary Commission has accomplished in behalf of the Federal authority and the cause of the North. The Commission broke down these State lines, ignored the dogma of separate State sovereignty, and merged the whole body of the citizens into one people. This was effected by volunteer agency alone, without assistance from Government or the National Legislature. The president of the Commission, Dr. Bellows and his subordinates, proved to the people of the various States that the army must be treated as a solid, indivisible body, not as an aggregate of independent integers; they made plain to them that it was well nigh impossible to follow individual regiments or battalions over the vast area of the war, except by dealing with them as parts of a national body; and, that could their design be effected, the expense of transportation and distribution would be enormous, and ultimately ruinous. One by one the hundreds of local and State "Soldiers' Aid Societies" throughout the North attached themselves to the United States' Commission; but there still remained an immense proportion of the citizens, especially the women, who laboured independently of any organisation whatever. The Commission undertook the *rôle* of disciplinarian, or schoolmaster, to these well-intentioned but short-sighted people, and ultimately attached the greater proportion to its ranks. Order succeeded to disorder, the mind of the country became disciplined, and this Volunteer Commission, by the simple forces of expediency and

reason, systematised the benevolence of the whole nation. Some remarks of Dr. Bellows on this question will not be out of place. In dealing with the objections to official routine which many people in America, as in England, take pleasure in gainsaying under the name of "Red Tape," he spoke as follows:—

"I know nothing more foolish and insane than that universal popular cry against 'red tape.' Permit me to say that in the army 'red tape' is as essential to men as white tape is at home to women. I need not say it is an equal folly to attempt to do without the one as to do without the other. Instead of decrying 'red tape,' all my experience has taught me to believe that the principal difficulties connected with the humane administration of army affairs are due to the neglect of 'red tape.' If you could have real 'red tape,' not that kind painted on barbers' poles, which ties up nothing—if you could only have real rule, method, and habit, carried out to the death even, you would have the surest way of attaining to the best results in military affairs. And that is a matter that ought to be more generally understood among the women and men in the land. The women—God bless them—think that it requires nothing but a good and loving heart to aid the poor soldier; but I can assure you, that however ardent, and warm the heart, its pulsations, to be effective, must be regulated by order and method."

The Relief Department, as now organised, consists of two branches —"General" and "Special," each possessing its distinct executive and staff, both surbordinate to the Executive and Standing Committees of the Commission. *General relief* is given in the form of hospital supplies and sanitary stores to the general and field hospitals, and to regimental hospitals and armies in the field. The *special relief* branch deals with needy and sick soldiers in the vicinity of military depôts, and with men accepting furlough or discharged from the service. It is also given with equal liberality to prisoners of war and paroled men, and to individual cases of special suffering wherever found among soldiers, for which the army regulations do not provide. Finally, the sick and wounded are assisted in other modes than those above enumerated, their friends and relatives being likewise aided by the Hospital Directory and other agencies.

Under these organisations every camp and military hospital, from the Atlantic to the plains beyond the Mississippi, is regularly and frequently visited, its wants ascertained, anticipated as far as possible, and, whenever needed, supplied immediately by the Commission to the full extent of its ability. For the means of maintaining the necessary organisation, and of exercising through it a direct influence upon the officers and men, the Commission is wholly dependant upon voluntary contributions. It is the same in respect to all the various articles, whether of food, clothing, medicines, hospital furniture, &c., supplied by it to the army, for it has received no pecuniary aid whatever from the Government.

It must not be supposed that the Medical Department of the army has in any way relaxed its efforts on account of the labours of this Commission, or that the medical requirements of the soldiers are less

carefully attended to by the American Government than is found amongst other nations. The articles of medicines, hospital furniture, food, delicacies, &c., are as diversified and numerous in the American Army Regulations as those of any European army; and that refuge of the surgeon at critical periods—the Hospital Fund—is thoroughly well organised and amply supplied. The regular army ration daily served to the troops consists of the following items and quantities:—

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. pork, *or* $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. fresh beef.
18 oz. biscuit, *or* 20 oz. soft bread or flour.
1-10th lb. coffee.
1-6th lb. sugar.
1-10th lb. rice, *or*
1-10th lb. beans or hominy.

Besides
Fresh or dessicated vegetables, molasses and vinegar, supplied at intervals during the week.

Very few men could consume the whole of such a ration as the above. What remains over is returned to the commissary-sergeant of the regiment by the Captains of the different Companies; the value in money goes to increase the Regimental Hospital Fund, and is used to purchase comforts and delicacies for the sick and wounded at the option of the surgeon.

The Medical Staff acts in the *rear* of the army. The Sanitary Commission's relief system operates in the *front*, and, in addition, supplements the Medical Staff in its labours *as a reserve*. Medical Staffs are constituted to deal with the ordinary requirements of military life, whether in time of peace or during campaigns; they are organized in view of averages of wounds, sickness, or accidents, and the most efficient of them will, in times of emergency, find greater demands upon its attention than it can supply. The American surgeons have found this to be most emphatically the case during the present war. An unexpected and rapid movement of an army has occasionally left the entire hospital-train far away in the rear; or a general advance after a sanguinary engagement has deprived the various regiments of most, if not all, their medical officers and attendants, who were left on the field with the wounded. On these occasions, the surgeons and trained agents of the Commission have supplied, as far as possible, the places of the absent surgeons, drawing upon the Commission's stores for everything required by the new list of sufferers. The following extract from the Commission's official report of its labours during and after the battle o Gettysburgh, will show how such relief is furnished:—

"When the enemy (under General Lee) was known to have crosse the Potomac in force, responsible and experienced officers of the Com mission were stationed at Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, an Frederick, and a systematic daily communication was establishe between the agents moving with the different columns of the army an the central office of the Commission. Supplies were accumulated an held ready for movement at different points on the circumference of th seat of war, and care was taken to have ample reserves at the branc

offices, ready for shipment. With the first news of the battle at Gettysburg, Westminster, the nearest point of railroad communication with the battle-field, was fixed upon as the point of approach, and authority to run a car daily with the Government trains was obtained.

"Two waggon-loads of battle-field supplies had been distributed to meet deficiences in the stores of the surgeons, shortly before the battle commenced. These waggons returned to Frederick for loads, and two others, fully loaded, arrived from Frederick at the moment of the assault of Longstreet upon the left wing of the loyal army, and were driven under fire to reach the collections of wounded in its rear. As one of them came to a point where several hundred sufferers had been taken from the ambulances and laid upon the ground behind a barn and in an orchard, less than a thousand yards in the rear of our line of battle, then fiercely engaged, a surgeon was seen to throw up his arms, exclaiming, 'There is the Sanitary Commission, now we shall be able to do something.' He had exhausted nearly all his supplies; and the brandy, beef-soup, sponges, chloroform, lint, and bandages, which were at once furnished to him, were undoubtedly the means of saving many lives.

"Supplies having arrived at Westminster before the close of the battle, a school-house, centrally situated among the *corps* hospitals, was taken as a field depôt, to which they were brought as speedily as possible by the three remaining waggons then on the ground, and from which they were rapidly distributed where most needed. Eleven waggon-loads of special supplies were here distributed to the *corps* hospitals, and to scattering groups of wounded found on the field, before any supplies arrived by railroad. Additional means of transportation were at length procured from the country people, of whom also some stores were purchased, and a station was opened in the town of Gettysburgh. On the 6th, the branch railroad to Gettysburgh, which had been broken up by the enemy, was so far repaired as to allow a train to approach within a mile of the town. By the first train which came over it after the battle, two car loads of most valuable goods were sent by the Commission, and two or more went by each succeeding train for a week. The wounded now began to be brought from the field to the railroad for removal to fixed hospitals elsewhere. As they arrived much faster than they could be taken away, they were laid on the ground exposed to the rain, or to the direct rays of the sun, *without food.* This having been anticipated and provided for by the Commission's agents in Baltimore, on the second day of the battle the Commission had a complete relief station, on a large scale, in operation at the temporary terminus of the railroad. It consisted of several tents and awnings, with a kitchen and other conveniences. In the meantime, the movements of the army and the prospect of another great battle on the Potomac, demanded the attention of the Commission. Six new waggons with horses were procured in Baltimore and Washington and sent to Frederick, to which point also supplies were forwarded by rail and thence transferred by waggons to Boonsboro', where a house was taken and a depôt established on the same day that Boonsboro' was occupied by General Meade. A house for a depôt was also secured at

Hagerstown as soon as the enemy retired from it. Supplies were at the same time sent by rail down the Cumberland Valley, with waggons and horses for their further carriage, procured in Philadelphia."

Immediately the news of the battle reached the North, the agents of the Commission dispatched surgeons engaged for the occasion to the scene of hostilities. As in every other instance, the surgeons, on their arrival, reported themselves for duty, with their assistants and nurses, to the army medical officers. Some idea of the amount of work gone through at Gettysburgh may be formed when it is recollected that upwards of 20,000 wounded men remained on the field at the close of the battle. The Commission dispatched no less than 60 tons of perishable articles to the scene of action, stowed in refrigerating waggons. The following list of articles given away on the occasion by the Commission, *to friend and foe alike without distinction*, may be interesting:—

Clothing, &c.

Drawers, woollen	5,310 prs.	Oil-silk	300 yards
,, cotton	1,833 ,,	Tin basins and cups	7,000
Shirts, woollen	7,158	Oil-linen and bandages	110 brls.
,, cotton	3,266	Water tanks	7
Pillows	2,114	Water coolers	46
Pillow cases	264	Bay rum and Eau de Cologne	225 bots.
Bed-sacks	1,630	Fans	3,500
Blankets	1,007	Chloride of lime	11 brls.
Sheets	274	Shoes and slippers	4,000 prs.
Wrappers	508	Crutches	1,200
Handkerchiefs	2,659	Lanthorns	180
Stockings, woollen	3,560 prs.	Candles	350 lbs.
,, cotton	2,558 ,,	Canvas	300 yds.
Bed utensils	728	Mosquito-netting	648 pieces
Towels and napkins	10,000	Paper	237 quires
Sponges	2,300	Pants, coats, hats	189 pieces
Combs	1,500	Plaster	16 rolls.
Buckets	200		
Soap, Castile	250 lbs.		

Food, &c.

Poultry and mutton	11,000 lbs.	Ice	20,000 lbs.
Butter	6,430 ,,	Concentrated beef soup	3,800 ,,
Eggs	8,500 doz.	,, milk	12,500 ,,
Garden vegetables	675 bush.	Prepared farina	7,000 ,,
Berries	48 ,,	Dried fruit	3,500 ,,
Bread	12,900 lvs.	Jellies	2,000 jars
Tamarinds	750 gals.	Preserved fish	3,600 lbs.
Lemons	116 box.	Pickles	400 gals.
Oranges	46 ,,	Tobacco	100 lbs.
Coffee	850 lbs.	Tobacco pipes	1,000
Chocolate	831 ,,	Indian meal	1,621 lbs.
Tea	426 ,,	Starch	1,074 ,,
White sugar	6,800 ,,	Cod fish	3,848 ,,
Syrups	785 bots.	Canned fruit	582 cans
Brandy	1,250 ,,	,, oysters	72 ,,
Whiskey	1,168 ,,	Brandy peaches	303 jars
Wine	1,148 ,,	Catsup	43 ,,
Ale	600 gals.	Vinegar	24 bots.
Biscuit, rusks, &c.	134 bar.	Jam ginger	43 jars.
Preserved meats	500 lbs.		

The estimated value of these articles was, in round numbers, 75,000 dollars, or £15,000 sterling, but there was a great additional outlay for kitchens, sleeping quarters, shelters, &c., constructed on the field. The battle of Gettysburgh is no exceptional instance in the Commission's record, and must be taken simply as a sample of what is performed, in an equal or less degree, by the Commission whenever and wherever an engagement takes place.

In the single military department of the West, that is to say, to the armies of the Tennessee and the Cumberland, now forming the commands of Generals Sherman and Thomas, articles similar to the above were supplied by the Commission during the two years preceding September 1st, 1863, to the value of 2,250,000 dollars and upwards—£450,000 in English currency. The Department of Virginia made still greater claims upon this Volunteer Association, whilst steady and continuous streams of benevolence are flowing from the same source to New Orleans, Savannah, Arkansas, and the Rio Grande, wherever, in fine, there are troops holding posts or engaged in campaigning.

The operations of the Commission in respect to anti-scorbutic vegetables are deserving of attentive study. Next to *malaria*, there is nothing so calculated to diminish the efficiency of troops as scurvy, and it is probable that most of the ailments affecting armies are nothing more nor less than types of this insidious and little understood disease. The attention of the Commission was first called to this subject by the condition of the Western armies, and it acted with such promptitude in the emergency, by purchasing vegetables in the Western markets, that those articles immediately rose to an unprecedented figure as a consequence. It soon understood, however, that it would not do to depend upon the markets alone, and it established vegetable gardens in various parts of the country, appointed special cultivators at its own expense, and supplied them with all the necessaries of agriculture, such as tools, seeds, and manure. I will again cite one army as a sample of the rest, and quote from a letter written by the general treasurer of the Commission. In speaking of the army of the Potomac in front of Petersburg, he writes as follows last July:

"There are, of course, signs of a scorbutic taint diffused throughout the army, and the Commission is doing everything to check its progress. I am satisfied that the operations of the Commission in this one direction will exercise an appreciable influence on the result of the campaign, and that they are equivalent to reinforcement by an additional army corps. It seems certain that the daily issue of 50,000 lbs. (70,000 rations last Friday) of anti-scorbutic vegetables, pickles, lemons, onions, tomatoes, &c., to the men themselves, in the trenches and elsewhere, must have a considerable effect in keeping down tendency to disease, and economising the efficiency of the army. We keep 40 four-horse waggons of our own constantly moving between City Point and the front; and we have five steamers running constantly between City Point and Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York, for transportation of these stores."

While on the subject of anti-scorbutics, I would seek your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the article on "Scurvy" in this volume of medical

pamphlets published by the Commission. It is from the pen of Dr. Hammond, the late surgeon-general of our army; and several eminent physicians and surgeons in England have spoken of it in high terms of commendation.

In all articles furnished by the Commission, the utmost caution is exercised. Instructions are given to the different agents to divide and distribute as fairly as possible, the most needy being first and liberally dealt with. Care is likewise taken that no army officer, medical, or otherwise, shall be relieved from responsibility in securing for those dependent upon him all that he ought to obtain directly of the Government. For every dollar's worth issued at the numerous depôts controlled by the Commission, vouchers are signed by the surgeon or his assistant, and countersigned by the Commission's inspectors, who have previously ascertained that the supplies are actually needed.

The vast majority of the contributions from the people are necessarily in kind, especially in respect to clothing. The system by which these goods are obtained may be likened to the economy of the human body. Villages around towns pour in their offerings to the latter; these again forward the goods in bulk to the principal cities of districts, the great centres like New York, Washington, Cairo, or Cincinnati making requisitions upon them for whatever may be needed. The electric telegraph binds the whole to the head-quarters of the Commission, well represented by the heart, and this again pours out a steady stream of supply to the various armies and bodies of troops in every part of the country. It is, in fact, similar to the vein and artery system of our bodies.

The cash receipts of the Commission, from its establishment to the 1st of October last year, amounted to 3,083,124 dollars, or about £620,000 sterling, reckoning five dollars to the pound. Of this amount five-sixths were expended up to the same date in the purchase of medicines, food, &c., and in distributing articles of all kinds to the army. The "supply department," which has for its work the collecting, storing, forwarding, and distributing of supplies, together with the relief service, requires the labour of a permanent *corps* of employées, averaging 200 men. There are other bureaus, as, for instance, the department of medical inspection, or "inquiry and advice," by which, for nearly four years, a series of inspections has been kept up by scientific men in the general and field hospitals, and the different regiments. There are also the bureaus of "special relief," the "hospital directory," "statistics," and "publication." The appraised value of articles in kind received by the Commission to October, 1864, was 8,406,272 dollars. The Commission owns its horses, waggons, harness, barges, store-houses, tents, and hires its own transports, yet the entire cost of distribution was only 410,455 dollars, *or* 4·88 *per centum of the value of the supplies distributed over an area half as large as the continent of Europe.* Previous to July 1st, 1864, the cost of distribution over the entire country was but 3·76 of the value of the supplies, but the ratio was greatly increased during the subsequent three months by the necessity of chartering steamers and vessels for carrying anti-scorbutic vegetables to the army of the Potomac. 2,250,000 dollars' worth of

supplies were distributed to the Western Department in the two years ending September 1st, 1863, at an entire cost of only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per centum upon the valuation. The Commission makes it a rule to pay all its *employées*, believing that work to be well done must be paid for, but the members of the executive committee, 22 in number, who have the entire responsibility of everything resting upon them, give all their time and services gratis.

The field relief and ambulance corps, forming a distinct branch, is charged with certain duties on the march, and during action. Its place is absolutely in the front, and it has constantly advanced with storming parties at such assaults as those on Forts Wagner and McAllister on the Ogeechee and Fort Fisher. At the close of the action it hunts up the wounded, carries them to the rear, treats them surgically when the regular surgeons are too occupied, and carries the exhausted and suffering to the temporary lodges of the Commission, where they may obtain food and shelter.

The department of Special Relief was established at an early period of the war, and has grown to be one of the most important of all, requiring a special executive and a very large corps of trained assistants. Its objects are the following:—

1. To supply to the sick men of the newly-arrived regiments such medicines, food, and care as it is impossible for them to receive in the midst of the confusion, and with the unavoidable lack of facilities, from their own officers. The men to be thus aided are those who are not so sick as to have a claim upon a general hospital, and yet need immediate care to guard them against serious sickness.
2. To furnish suitable food, lodging, care, and assistance to men who are honourably discharged from service, sent from general hospitals, or from their regiments; but who are often delayed a day or more in the city, sometimes many days, before they obtain their papers and pay.
3. To communicate with distant regiments in behalf of discharged men, whose certificates of disability or descriptive lists on which to draw their pay prove to be defective; the invalid soldiers in the meantime being cared for, and not exposed to the fatigue and risk of going in person to their regiments to have their papers corrected.
4. To act as the unpaid agent or attorney of discharged soldiers, who are too feeble or too utterly disabled to present their own claims at the paymaster's office.
5. To look into the condition of discharged men who assume to be without means to pay the expense of going to their homes, and to furnish the necessary means where we find the man is true and the need real.
6. To secure disabled soldiers railway and other tickets at reduced rates; and, through an agent at the railroad and other stations, to see that these men are not robbed or imposed upon by sharpers.
7. To see that all men who are discharged and paid off, do at once leave the city for their homes; or in cases where they have been

induced by evil companions to remain behind, to endeavour to rescue them, and see them started with through tickets to their own towns.

8. To make reasonably clean and comfortable, before they leave the city, such discharged men as are deficient in cleanliness and clothes.
9. To be prepared to meet at once, with food or other aid, such immediate necessities as arise when sick men arrive in the city in large number from battle-fields or distant hospitals.
10. To keep a watchful eye upon all soldiers who are out of hospitals yet not in service, and give information to the proper authorities of such soldiers as seem endeavouring to avoid duty, or to desert from the ranks.

The "Soldiers' Homes" connected with this branch, are established at various points in the neighbourhood of the armies, and, literally, millions of meals and nights' lodging have been given gratis to the soldiers by their means. There are twenty-two of these Special Relief Stations in the North and West. During the first thirty months of the war 121,047 nights' lodging, in clean beds, were given to passing soldiers in the single city of Washington, while 359,816 men sat down to table in addition to many thousand meals distributed in steamboats and railway trains. "Nurses' Houses" are set apart for the benefit of the nurses of the Army and Commission when not actually engaged in duty; and crowds of soldiers' relatives, from different sections of the country, have also been entertained in them temporarily.

One of the best forms of Special Relief is that furnished by the "Hospital Directory," a regular record of the name, regiment, state, complaint, condition, &c., of every soldier in all the military hospitals of the country. Upwards of a million names are now inscribed on its pages, and no fee whatever is exacted for information. The entire operations of the Commission, from first to last, are administered without fee or reward.

I have thus sketched, though only in a rapid and cursory manner, the salient points of the Commission's work. The best of all arguments in its favour is to be found in the orders of American Generals in reference to it, the emphatic approval of the army and navy surgeons—for a goodly portion of its supplies is furnished to that branch of the service—and its popularity with the troops themselves. Its work is absolutely Samaritan, and has obtained the warm approval of the Confederate surgeons and military authorities; but whilst recognising the philanthropy of its labours, it must not be forgotten that the reason of the Commission's existence, and the cause of its support by the nation at large, are due to its increasing the strength and efficiency of the national forces. The Sanitary Commission of the United States' Army has educated the people to the requirements of the war, and forced the entire nation to interest itself in the well-being of the soldier. The army has been a *lever* resting on a *fulcrum*—the Government at Washington; but the women, and children, and men in the far away homes of the North have been the *power* manœuvring the *lever*. The Sanitary Commission has, in fine, disciplined and instructed the whole

people, and enlisted every man, woman, and child in the military service of the country.

The Chairman: Gentlemen, it is only at our Evening Meetings that discussions are allowed; consequently, on the present occasion, I am sorry to say, no questions can be asked, nor any observations made which would give rise to discussion. It is our custom, however, upon these occasions to thank the Lecturer for his kindness, and if any gentleman present is inclined to move that vote of thanks, it will give an opportunity for expressing his opinions upon the general subject of the paper, which I think is one of the most important that, to my knowledge, has ever been brought under our notice within the walls of this theatre.

Sir Harry Verney, Bart, M.P.: Mr. Chairman, I take the liberty of profiting by the permission which you have given, to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Fisher for the very interesting lecture which he has been so good as to communicate to us. Before I go further, I will say that I shall take the earliest opportunity of informing Miss Nightingale of the notice which Mr. Fisher has taken of her labours. I know that been instrumental in forwarding the cause of humanity in the armies of the United States. This is a kind of rivalry in which all of us can with great joy and satisfaction unite, viz., who shall be the first in the cause of humanity? who shall do the most to prevent the horrors of war afflicting more than is absolutely necessary those who are exposed to them? and in endeavouring, as far as possible, to communicate to each other all the information we are able to obtain, so that the armies of each nation may benefit by the experience of the other. We Englishmen must feel gratified to know that the cause of humanity in the armies of the Federals and the Confederates has been advanced by our own experience in the Crimean and other wars; and if we in return are enabled to benefit by the experience now being gained by the Army Sanitary Commission in the United States, I am sure it will be a source of satisfaction to us, as it will be to our brethren in America. The points upon which the Lecturer has touched are most interesting and important. I cannot help hoping that the lecture, which has been so eloquent, and communicated in such an interesting way, may be printed, so that we all may derive the fullest benefit from it. It seems to me a pity, when a lecture is read in this Institution, the details of which we can only remember very cursorily, that we should not have the opportunity of studying it at our leisure, and gathering from it all the lessons which the information contained is calculated to convey to us. Therefore, I venture to hope that Mr. Fisher will consent to the lecture being printed. With regard to the extraordinary fact of the benefit of sanitary arrangements, I am reminded of that which is probably known to the Lecturer, that the mortality of our Guards has diminished from fifteen per thousand to seven per thousand in the course of a very few years, in consequence of the sanitary arrangements that have been carried out in the army. And whereas our army in the Crimea lost more men, probably, than any army we

ever sent abroad, I believe it is the fact that our army in the last expedition to China lost less; indeed, I have been assured that the health of our army while in China was better than the health of the same number of men in this country. That result I believe to be entirely owing to the admirable sanitary arrangements which are now carried out and which were adopted in consequence of the disasters that we suffered in the Crimean war. Those who desire the welfare of our army must, I am sure, wish that those disasters should be ever present to our minds; for I confess I should view with great regret any relaxation of the efforts which have been made to improve the sanitary condition of the soldier. My firm conviction is that there is no subject to which the attention of Parliament is given with greater satisfaction and greater earnestness, than that of providing for the welfare of our soldiers and sailors. I believe there is no course more economically wise, even if we were to put the matter upon that low principle, the saving of money, than to take every measure by which the health and welfare of our soldiers and sailors may be promoted, so as to make them what they ought to be, models of good health and good conduct. For my part I shall never be satisfied with regard to the character of our sailors and soldiers, until I hear of an old soldier or an old sailor returning to his native village the best conducted man there, and being welcomed by his neighbours as the most valuable acquisition that can be brought into their community. A great deal has been done in that direction, but a great deal more remains to be done; and I believe, by the exertions of those who are at present at the head of our army and navy carrying into effect the wishes of the country upon the subject, that much more will be effected. I take the liberty of proposing that we return our sincere thanks to Mr. Fisher, and I beg to assure him that we heartily desire to express our good will to that great country from which he comes and our earnest hope that the present war which now afflicts the country may cease, and that the inhabitants of America, as well as of our country, may remain on the best terms and cultivate the arts of peace.

The Chairman: Sir Harry Verney has mentioned the advantages which will arise from the printing of Mr. Fisher's paper, and to these I may add my belief that it will be of considerable interest abroad, where so much attention has been given to the subject, particularly at Geneva. M. Henri Dunant has written a work entitled "Un Souvenir de Solferino," a very touching book, which must be very well known to many gentlemen present. M. Dunant originated the meeting in that city which gave rise to the "*Conférence Internationale de Genève pour étudier les moyens de pourvoir à l'insuffisance du service sanitaire dans les armées en campagne.*" The documents connected with this movement have been sent to this Institution, and are now in the library, and since the announcement of the present lecture, one or two foreign newspapers have been sent to me containing articles upon the subject. I only regret that they have not been put into the hands of some gentleman more competent to speak upon the subject. The papers allude to the nationalisation of the hospitals of armies in the field. This, among

thers, was the object of the meeting at Geneva. Many of the powers f Europe have given their adhesion to the proposal. The Emperor of ıe French especially did so, and I have been told that within the last ɔrtnight the Government of this country has done the same. For ıis there exists a very good precedent, because it will be in the minds f many present, that at the battle of Dettingen, George II. confided to ıe Duc de Noailles his wounded, and subsequently Lord Stair, in riting to the Duc de Noailles to say that he had liberated the whole f the French prisoners, thanked the Duke for the care that had been ken of the English wounded, saying, "Such generosity softens the gours of war, and does honour to humanity." This appears to have ven rise to a treaty between Lord Stair and the Duc de Noailles. believe in the Seven Years' War a similar treaty existed. I have ken the liberty of mentioning these instances, because they appear to of much interest. I only regret that the supplementing by volunry aid, the sanitary service of armies in the field, will not be introıced at an evening meeting, to afford an opportunity for the discussion that subject. I will conclude by reverting for a moment to the war the Austrian succession. I believe it was upon that occasion that ince Eugène said that 100,000 men would be a better guarantee ıan 100,000 treaties. We now have an exception to this rule, for I ink one treaty in favour of humanity will be more efficacious than the rce of 100,000 men. I have now the pleasing duty to perform, of nveying to Mr. Fisher the thanks of this meeting for a most imrtant and a most interesting lecture.

Mr. Fisher: Allow me to thank you, in the first place, for your endly feeling in asking me to lecture on the subject. As a stranger, d yet not a stranger, for I trust that we in America feel that we are e with you, I must say that I feel honoured on behalf of the United ates' Sanitary Commission by the courtesy which has been extended me by the invitation to lecture here; and I feel greatly honoured your kindness in listening so attentively, and deeply gratified by e endorsement that you have put, not on American work, but on manitarian work. In the name of common humanity, I tender you r thanks.

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